



# The Creative Woman

Quarterly

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**Our World's Children**



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by Jim Saul

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## CREATIVE WOMAN MEETS THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE CHILD

Guest Editorial

*by Roberta Meyer Bear*



Roberta, 1945

When Helen Hughes and I first sat down to plan this issue, we found we had to do two things at once: limit the number of topics, for there is much to say about children and their many worlds; and confront the contradiction between fantasies of childhood as a happy and innocent time, and the sober and heavy reality it so often is.

Research for this issue led me to deliver a talk at the Unitarian Universalist Community Church in Park Forest, Illinois, on the occasion of United Nations day. "Our Children's World" was an overview, like that presented in this issue's lead article, a comparison of the world we say we want for our children and the world we have made for them. I have never spoken before a quieter audience. No one knew what to say afterwards. I believe their discomfort was not because what I

said was so bloody depressing-- and it was--but because I had told them nothing new. I keep finding that the first task of the child advocate is merely to remind people of the awful facts we already know about how we cheat our children of a decent life.

Naming 1979 the International Year of the Child, the United Nations asked its members and other nations to demonstrate their recognition of the importance of children through programs to improve their life and future. The approach to this effort was, however, significantly different from other international years--unlike the geophysical year, women's year, and regular Olympic years, no international events were scheduled for IYC, no world plan was developed, no overall coordination was established. The UN Children's Fund, UNICEF, was designated "lead agency" to provide information on its programs to save children throughout the world. But UNICEF has been saving children and telling the world about it for a long time; they would have done that this year as in every other year. No extra resources were allocated to improve or increase their efforts.

In the United States, a National Commission in IYC was appointed. The primary task undertaken by this commission was to collect data on the status of American children and make priority recommendations. They have discovered so far that significant numbers of American children live in distressing poverty and malnutrition, unprotected from serious childhood diseases, without access to medical and dental care, and subject to physical and psychological abuse.

The United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare regularly collects and publishes just such data. Their 1977 document on the status of children<sup>1</sup> contains most of the same information collected in 1979 by the IYC commission. The recent Carnegie Council report on the status of American children and their families<sup>2</sup> likewise describes the plight of the helpless and needy:

their list of recommendations could have been the starting point for IYC programming in the US.

On the international level, the US might have adopted the Indochinese boat children as a priority target for lifesaving efforts in IYC. Instead, the nation daily witnesses this suffering and waste of lives on the TV news. I find that chilling display the ultimate obscenity and the most moving example of our chauvinism. Those are, you see, their children dying, not ours.

In this issue of The Creative Woman, we have tried to deal with the many difficult issues of children's welfare by describing several of the worlds of children, and by making some suggestions--hopefully creative--for how ordinary folks in their everyday lives might enrich those worlds for our children.

We begin with the heavy stuff referred to earlier--in the larger geographic world, we offer an overview of selected data on the plight of children, and a closer look at a problem that exists in America and other wealthy nations: powerful media messages to children. I am personally gratified by Len Eron's courage in stating his conclusions, and I applaud his efforts to find ways to help parents help children cope with the barrage of TV violence daily assaulting their developing selfhood.

In our section on children in families, Lynn Strauss writes lovingly of the risks and dangers of parenting, and her optimism shines through. The other article in that section is devoted to poignant accounts of the difficulties of being a child.

The inner world of children features the bright and engaging work of children of all ages, many of them relatives of our staff and contributors. We commend these boys and girls who have shared their feelings with us, and we are grateful to the adults thoughtful enough to collect and save these clues to that inner world.

1 Snapper, Kurt J., and JoAnne S. Ohms, The Status of Children 1977. United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare Publication No. (OHDS) 78-30133

2 Keniston

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#### About The Guest Editor:

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# Part One: Children In The World

## OUR WORLD'S CHILDREN

Roberta Meyer Bear

Twenty years ago the United Nations adopted a declaration of the rights of children, typically paraphrased<sup>1</sup>:

Whereas mankind owes to the child the best that it has to give, the General Assembly proclaims that every child has the right:

- to affection, love and understanding;
- to adequate nutrition and medical care;
- to a free education;
- to full opportunity for play and recreation;
- to a name and nationality;
- to special care, if handicapped;
- to be among the first to receive relief in times of disaster;
- to learn to be a useful member of society and to develop individual abilities;
- to be brought up in a spirit of peace and universal brotherhood;
- to enjoy these rights regardless of race, color, sex, religion, nationality or social origin.

This promise to our world's children has not yet been realized. The International Year of the Child is an appropriate time to look at how close we are to achieving the most basic right of children: survival.

The UN regularly reports data on infant mortality around the world.<sup>2</sup> These data are illustrative of whether and how adults care about the world's children. The number of deaths under a year of age per one thousand live births varies considerably among nations. For example, in Egypt and Iran more than one hundred infants die per thousand live births, while in most western European countries only ten to twenty in a thousand die. Obviously the climate has something to do with this differential: the heat and humidity of the middle east and the lack of fresh water in arid regions, contributes to the spread of the exotic, incurable diseases which abound. But in neighboring Israel and Jordan, where bombs and bullets

add to the toll, fewer than twenty-five per thousand die. And in western European Portugal, forty die per thousand



South Africa reports separately for white and colored populations: 18.4 and 115.5, respectively. In the same geographic entity, with the same climate and water, a white child has better than a 98 percent chance of surviving to his first birthday, but the odds against a black child are better than one in ten. The South African government's apartheid policy may be held responsible: that medical, hygienic, and nutritional resources have been denied its colored people. This obviously distorted case doesn't prove the rule pointed to by the other figures, that keeping babies alive is a political problem rather than a medical one. As the South African government's policies relax and more

equal services are provided all its citizens, its infant mortality statistics should compare favorably with Europe's, or with modern black African nations like Mozambique (19 per thousand) nations where the descendants of slaves of two centuries ago now rule (Jamaica, 20 per thousand; Cuba 23 per thousand).

But the United States also reports infant mortality statistics separately for white and non-white: 14 per thousand among whites; 24 per thousand among blacks, asiatics, and native Americans.<sup>3</sup>

The conclusion is, after all, inescapable: the political nature of variability in infant mortality is greater than geographic or climatic differences. Adequate nutrition is listed in the children's bill of rights. A UNICEF document<sup>4</sup> estimates that the calories and protein missing from the diets of the world's starving children could be supplied annually at a cost of about a half-dollar per wealthy person in the world. Wealthy is defined as living in the western

among the oil-rich population. The idea that we could assess each well-fed person fifty cents a year to feed a malnourished child is creative, but it seems impractical: the logistics of obtaining money at one end and distributing food at the other is mind-boggling to most people. But the same UNICEF report notes that some wealthy nations routinely spend a hundred dollars per year per citizen for armaments. Perhaps we can be less than creative, and merely duplicate these mechanisms for obtaining metals and such at one end and distributing guns and bombs at the other. The vital step is to attach value and meaning to children's lives, and to make feeding the world's children a priority item. For it is only when children are kept alive and nourished that efforts at granting the other rights can be fruitful.



Stu Hodes

#### NOTES

- 1 Chanlett, Mrs. Eliska, and Mrs. G. M. Morier, "Declaration of the Rights of the Child." International Child Welfare Review, Vol. XXII, 1968.
- 2 1977 United Nations Demographic Yearbook, 29th Issue. United Nations, 1978.
- 3 Snapper, Kurt J., and JoAnne S. Ohms, The Status of Children 1977. United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare Publication No. (OHDS) 78-30133.
- 4 UNICEF NEWS. Issue #83/1975/1: The Child and the Environment.

## Effect of Television Violence on Children<sup>1</sup>

*by Leonard D. Eron, University  
of Illinois at Chicago Circle*

I don't think there can be any doubt that television influences behavior, especially behavior of children. Any mother who goes marketing in the Super-market with a young child sitting in the shopping cart or tagging along beside her can attest to that fact, especially when she gets to the checkout counter and sees all the sugar coated cereals, boxes of cookies and candy bars she didn't want which somehow mysteriously found their way into the cart.

It is ridiculous for the TV networks to insist that watching violent displays on television has no relation to subsequent violent behavior of viewers. If they did not expect television to influence behavior, manufacturers and merchandisers would not be sponsoring programs and there would be no commercials. I'm sure you'll never hear a TV sales representative tell a prospective customer for TV time that television does not influence behavior. That's what commercials are all about. That's how TV networks make money.

The research that I have done, as well as the research of other psychologists demonstrate pretty conclusively that display of television violence can cause aggressive behavior in children and has a lasting effect on their character and personality.

When I started my research more than 20 years ago, on how children learn to be aggressive. I had no idea how important television viewing was as a factor in causing aggressive behavior in children. In fact I was certain at that time that TV was really of no importance. No different than fairy stories, fables, comics, even the movies-these were certainly violent but they had been with us for years, especially fairy stories; and it

had never been demonstrated that Little Red Riding Hood, Jack the Giant Killer and Goldilocks made aggressive monsters of the kids who grew up listening to these stories and repeating them over and over again themselves. And so I was skeptical about what effect TV might have on aggressive behavior of children.



Masumi Hayushi Keeseey

We were interested at that time primarily in relating child-rearing practices of parents to aggressive behavior of children in school. We were interested in rewards and punishments parents administered for aggressive behavior, the models of aggressive behavior which the parent himself provided, and various social cultural factors such as father's occupation, social class, education, mobility, religion, frequency of church attendance, etc. Our sample included 875 children-all of the third grade school children in a semi-rural county in New York in 1960 and 70% of their mothers and fathers. Much to our surprise, we found

1. Based on an invited address at Annual Meeting of American Academy of Pediatrics, Illinois Chapter, Arlington Heights, Ill., April 27, 1979.

that for boys there seemed to be a direct positive relation between the violence of the TV programs they preferred and how aggressive they were in school. Since this was no more than a contemporaneous relation we didn't have too much confidence in the finding by itself. You couldn't tell by these data alone whether aggressive boys liked violent television programs or whether the violent programs made boys aggressive-or whether aggression and watching violent television were both due to some other third variable. However, because these findings fit in well with certain theories about learning by imitation, a cause and effect relation was certainly plausible.

Ten years later, however, in 1970, we were fortunate in being able to re-interview over half of our original sample. Our most striking finding again was the positive relation between viewing of violent television at age eight and aggression at age 19 in the male subjects. Actually the relation was even stronger than it was when both variables were measured at age eight. And further, there was no relation between a young man's aggression at age 19 and the amount of TV violence he viewed at that time. It's as if all the work had already been done. By the time a boy is a young adult the kinds of television programs he watches no longer affect his aggressive behavior.

By use of such statistical techniques as cross lagged correlations, path analysis, multiple regression and partial correlation, it was demonstrated that the most plausible interpretation of these data was that early viewing of violent television caused later aggression. For example, the correlation between TV violence at grade three and aggression ten years later is significantly greater than the correlation between aggression at grade three and TV violence ten years later. Further, if you control for how aggressive boys are at age eight, the relation does not diminish. As a matter of fact those boys who at age eight were low aggressive but watched violent television were significantly more aggressive ten years later than

boys who were originally high aggressive but watched non-violent programs.

Similarly we controlled for every other third variable that we could think of and had data on, which might account for this relation--IQ, social status, parents' aggression, social and geographical mobility, church attendance. None of these variables had an effect on the relation between violence of programs preferred by boys at age eight and how aggressive they were ten years later.

It seems there is a critical developmental period in a boy's life when he is very susceptible to the influence of violent TV. By the continued watching of aggressive TV programs the young male child comes to think aggression is an appropriate way to solve life's problems. We evaluated how realistic our teenage subjects thought TV was. For example we asked them, "How realistic do you think Gunsmoke is in telling about how life in the West really was?" or "How realistic would you say Mod Squad is in showing what police work is really like?" We found that the more realistic these 19 year old young men thought TV was, the more aggressive they were, the more they watched TV and the more violent were the programs they preferred. This is similar to the findings of George Gerbner of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communication, who found strong associations between patterns of network dramatic content and conceptions of social reality among children and adolescents. He found television cultivated an exaggerated sense of danger and mistrust in steady viewers compared with similar groups of those who watch television less frequently.

Why is this any different from the movies, you might ask? They certainly had lots of violence. Why didn't the movies have such an effect on people of my generation and, perhaps yours, those of you over 40, when we were growing up, when we were in this critical period? For one thing we weren't exposed as often-we only went to the movies on Saturday after-

noons perhaps, not every day and every night and four hours on Saturday morning. Also, it wasn't happening right in our own living room--let alone while we were having dinner--getting primary reinforcement in that way.

After a while the youngster becomes satiated with violence--there is a blunting of sensitivity and the child becomes apathetic about violence, and it takes more and more violence to get a reaction from him.

I would like to emphasize that this direct positive relation between violence of preferred programs and later aggression was true in that study only for boys. For girls, while the suggestion was not as strong as for boys, there were indications that viewing television violence may have lead to lessened aggression.

Why should there have been this differential effect of television violence on boys and girls? First, boys are often encouraged and reinforced in the direct and overt expression of aggression. On the other hand, girls are trained not to behave aggressively in a direct manner, and nonaggressive behaviors are reinforced. Thus, for girls television violence-viewing may actually be a positively sanctioned social activity in which aggressive girls may express aggression vicariously since they cannot express aggression directly in social interactions. The direct avenues for expression of aggressive behavior such as fighting, wrestling, pummeling, war games, etc. are open to boys and discouraged for girls. Moreover, both peer and adult cultures at least in the past have encouraged and reinforced direct rather than vicarious participation for boys in contact sports, but made little provision for the participation of girls.

Secondly, in 1960, there were far fewer aggressive females on television for a girl to imitate than there were aggressive males for a boy to imitate. Further, when girls did appear in violent sequences on television, they were usually victims of aggression or at best passive observers. So the more violent the programs girls

watched, the more they were exposed to female models as victims or passive observers, and the more they associated aversive consequences to aggression. Therefore, the less likely they were to be aggressive.

We also find that girls do not think television is as realistic as boys do. For them, TV is more a fantasy, an escape. They do not tend to think life is really this way. However those girls who do think television is realistic are more aggressive than those who do not and they tend to resemble boys more in other attitudes and values as measured by the Male-Female Scale of the MMPI. Finally, there is a strong positive relation between aggression of girls and the extent to which they watch contact sports in television. For boys there is no such relation. All boys watch contact sports, but it is primarily the aggressive girls who like to participate in this masculine ritual.

We are now in the final year of a three-year longitudinal study of 750 children in the Oak Park School District and two inner city schools in the Archdiocese of Chicago. When we started, half the subjects were in the first grade and half in the third grade; approximately half were boys and half were girls. They are now in the third and fifth grades. We have not yet completed the three year longitudinal analyses. However, we do have cross sectional data obtained from first and third grade children in the first wave of the study and some longitudinal analyses from first to second wave. These data are consonant with the previously obtained findings.

First, the positive relation between television violence viewing at home and aggressive behavior in school is reaffirmed for the entire sample--that is for both boys and girls. Further, as we go from first to second grade, and from third to fourth grade among the same subjects, the relation becomes stronger. There is a cumulative effect of continued watching. It is interesting to speculate on why we now

have the same positive effect for girls as we had only for boys in the earlier study. I mentioned before that in 1960 there were no aggressive female models on television. In the 1970's we've changed that. Mod Squad, Girl from Uncle, Police Woman, Bionic Woman, and others. When we separate television programs into those that have violence by male characters and violence by female characters we find that it is the violent female programs that contribute more to the relation of violence to the aggression of girls, and it is these programs that have the greater cumulative effect over a period of a year.

In general, however, this new study corroborates the findings of our original study. We now know that the relation between viewing violence and aggressive behavior can already be accounted for at age six. Jerome and Dorothy Singer of Yale University TV Reserach Center observed children's physically aggressive behavior in nursery school over the period of one year; they recently reported that this behavior was related to the amount of violence the youngsters, just 3 and 4 years old, viewed on television.

What are the implications of these findings? They point to two areas where efforts can be made which should eventually reduce aggression. The first and most direct is television violence. Significant overall reduction of violence and mayhem on the television screen would, I believe, lower the level of violence in American society. However, I think trying to get any significant change in television programming is like tilting at windmills. Despite the efforts of the AMA, the PTA and ACT, the level of violence on national and local TV has not diminished appreciably. In fact, according to Gerbner's survey, there were 15.6 violent incidents an hour in 1977 in children's programs but that figure rose to 25 an hour in 1978.

Barring any significant changes in programming, what can be done? For one thing we can teach parents and children techniques for counteracting

the effects of television. Efforts at devising such procedures are going on in at least two places. The Singers are preparing curricula to teach young children and their parents how to be intelligent television consumers; Rowell Huesmann and I are intervening with groups of children in our longitudinal study to determine the best way to ameliorate the relation between violence viewing and subsequent aggressive behavior in children. I wish I could report some great breakthrough in discovering a vaccine with which we could inoculate children so they would forever be immune to the effects of television violence. However, our first attempts do not appear to have been terribly successful. In the first year of our study, we focused our intervention on teaching children to distinguish between fantasy and reality, e.g. explaining how Bionic Woman and Six Million Dollar Man simulate the aggressive behaviors and other fantastic actions of these characters and having the children imagine similar feats and how they would simulate them. However, on a criterion test they did not distinguish fantasy from reality any better than a control group of children who engaged in different intervening activities. Whether the intervention will have an effect on the relation between violent viewing and subsequent aggressive behavior is still undetermined.

The Singers are having some success in their work with parents-teaching them how to turn off the TV, to monitor the child's watching, sharing the viewing experience, interpreting content, allaying fears and helping the child distinguish real from fantasy figures. As yet they have no data on how these interventions affect the relation between violence viewing and behavior.

The other place where we are going to have to direct massive efforts is in the area of values-of what it means to be a man or masculine in our society, since the preponderance of violence in our society is perpetrated by males or by females who are acting like males.

The results of our studies as well as those of other researchers, point to differential socialization as crucial in determining the different level of aggression in the two sexes. No matter how aggression is measured or observed, males always score higher. But there are some girls who seem to have been socialized like boys and who are just as aggressive as boys. Thus, although there may be conditions, organismically normal ones, like sex differences in testosterone level, which are implicated in aggressive behavior, this behavior is not necessarily immutable. Just as some females can learn to be aggressive, males can learn not to be aggressive. The significant variables are the values and expectations a society holds for the expression of aggressive behavior in one sex rather than another and the rewards it provides or withdraws when that behavior is displayed. If we want to reduce the level of aggression in society we should also discourage boys from aggression very early on in life and reward them for other behaviors: in other words we should socialize boys more like we have been socializing girls. Rather than insisting that little girls should be treated like little boys and given exactly the same opportunities for participation in athletic events, Little League, entry into locker rooms etc., as well as all other aspects of life, it should be the other way around. Boys should be socialized the way girls have been traditionally socialized and they should be encouraged to develop civilized qualities like tenderness, nurturance, cooperation and aesthetic sensitivity. When I say this, it makes some of my more macho colleagues nervous, but the level of individual aggression in society will be reduced only when male adolescents and young adults, as a result of socialization, subscribe to the same standards of behavior as have been traditionally encouraged for women.

In closing I would like to repeat the old cliché that behavior which is learned can be unlearned, and aggressive behavior is no different: it can be unlearned. But how much

easier would it be, how much pain and suffering the loss of life and property would be eliminated if we arranged conditions so that aggression was not learned in the first place and all youngsters learned alternative ways of solving problems.

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## Memorandum

*To: The World Community*

*From: A Child*

*Subject: Year of the Child*

1. Don't spoil me. I know quite well that I ought not to have all that I ask for—I'm only testing you.
2. Don't be afraid to be firm with me. I prefer it. It makes me feel more secure.
3. Don't let me form bad habits. I have to rely on you to detect them in the early stages.
4. Don't make me feel smaller than I am. It only makes me behave stupidly "big."
5. Don't correct me in front of people if you can help it. I'll take much more notice if you talk quietly with me in private.
6. Don't make me feel that my mistakes are sins. It upsets my sense of values.
7. Don't protect me from consequences. I need to learn the painful way sometimes.
8. Don't be too upset when I say, "I hate you." It isn't you I hate but your power to thwart me.
9. Don't nag. If you do, I shall have to protect myself by ignoring you.
10. Don't take too much notice of my small ailments. Sometimes they get me the attention I need.
11. Don't make rash promises. Remember that I feel badly let down when promises are broken.
12. Don't forget that I cannot explain myself as well as I should like. That is why I'm not always accurate.
13. Don't tax my honesty too much. I am easily frightened into telling lies.
14. Don't put me off when I ask questions. If you do, you will find that I stop asking and seek my information elsewhere.
15. Don't be inconsistent. That completely confuses me and makes me lose faith in you.
16. Don't tell me my fears are silly. They are terribly real and you do much to reassure me if you try to understand.
17. Don't ever suggest that you are perfect or infallible. It gives me too great a shock when I discover that you aren't.
18. Don't ever think that it is beneath your dignity to apologize to me. An honest apology makes me feel surprisingly warm toward you.
19. Don't forget I love experimenting. I can't get on without it; so please put up with it.
20. Don't forget how quickly I am growing up. It must be very difficult for you to keep pace with me, but please try.
21. Don't forget that I can't thrive without lots of understanding love . . . but I don't need to tell you, do I?
22. Treat me the way you treat your friends, then I will be your friend, too.
23. Remember, I learn more from a MODEL than a critic.

## Part Two: Children In Families

### SAYING YES TO LIFE...AND DEATH

by Lynn Thomas Strauss



Lynn, 1950

We live in a time in which most people can choose whether or not to have a baby, when to have a baby, and how many babies they want. The impact of exercising these choices (and we all must-even if we choose not to choose) is profound. We must deal on an intimate level with feelings and realities our own parents never knew. The power to choose whether or not to create a new human being is a tremendous responsibility and burden. There are few guidelines to help us in our decision making. If we are to make meaningful choices on this crucial question then it might be helpful for those of us who have already chosen, either yes or no, to communicate something of what it has been like for us.

I have been a parent for nearly six years now and as I watch and participate in my children's growth, I am also keenly aware of the changes I have gone through. Parenthood has tapped potential in me that

I was unaware of and has caused me to think about and experience life from a broadened perspective.

Throughout these years I have sought to understand myself and my life situation in the light of both my past and the family script handed down to me, and the present in which messages about family in our society are so ambiguous. We live in a time of much ambivalence about the value of raising children and there are few concrete supports or reinforcements for those of us embarking on the rough road of parenthood. Each family is expected to stand on its own two feet and not to admit to needing any help. The state of marriage, the state of the economy, and the quality of life must all be considered. Given these harsh realities the weighing of pro or con concerning childbearing is not easy.

Among our peers, three children is considered a large family and we have many friends who are, in their mid and late thirties, still childfree. Why then have we chosen as we have? What are the factors that influence reproductive choice? What is the meaning and significance of our choices and those of our friends in both the short and the long run? These are important questions. Perhaps by sharing my experience I can suggest some answers for others.

During my first pregnancy I examined my reasons for wanting to have a child; six years and two more pregnancies later those early motivations still are meaningful to me. In an article I wrote during that first pregnancy I stated; "I wanted to become pregnant because I wanted to know myself fully. In seeking all these years to know who I am, I wanted to know this part of

myself too--conception, pregnancy, birth, nursing, and mothering. I wanted to have a child because I like children, the way they are and the things they do. I wanted to feel unconditional trust and loving, to know the texture, shape, color, smell and taste of life again... the gifts that children bring. I wanted to respond to the task of creating new family forms, to share with my husband, David, and others the responsibilities and joys of enabling a new human life to grow and remain a free and loving human being in spite of the often dehumanizing world in which we live."

These reasons for choosing parenthood still reflect my feelings and beliefs; but in living through six years of parenting I have encountered myself in unanticipated ways. One hidden part of myself I have had to confront as a parent has been my fear of death. In giving life to another I found that I unwittingly had to confront death or at least fear of death--death as a possibility. Throughout pregnancy I would dream of my death or the death of my unborn baby. When pregnant I was afraid to drive alone or too fast because I was already responsible for two lives and would therefore be responsible for two deaths.

In childbirth there is even now, danger to the life of the mother and the baby, and my overwhelming feeling in the delivery room immediately after birth was of immense relief. I, like all new parents, counted my baby's toes and fingers and searched carefully for any sign of a defect. And in the middle of the night, I have stood over my newborn's crib to check and make sure she was still breathing. Through the process of becoming a parent, fears I thought I had so under control have risen to threaten me again.

Beginning in pregnancy, I

experienced a physical interdependence and survival awareness that is, I think, a vital clue in the differing ways in which mothers and fathers experience parenthood. It is an interdependence of sometimes awesome magnitude. I remember the first time I went out alone after the birth of my first baby. Particularly because I was breast feeding, I was painfully aware of how dependent that baby was upon me and me alone for her survival. I very consciously took greater care while crossing the street than I had in my pre-parent life. And I certainly didn't stay out late at night or travel too far from home.

Much maternal behavior that is negatively categorized as over-protectiveness stems perhaps from this physical interdependence. Before birth and in the first months of life an infant is totally dependent on its mother for its life. After birth a father can take over some or all of this responsibility for the life and death of his child, but in our culture, he rarely does. The absence of this physical bond between the child and his father sets the stage for a very different kind of relationship than exists between mother and child.

The parental urge to protect your children, to keep them at home, to see that they eat right, reflects the anxiety we feel in the face of death. Every parent has experienced the terror of dealing with a very sick child or the near fatal accident on the playground and wondered, "How can I give my child the freedom to face such a hostile and dangerous world?" Having brought them through infancy and babyhood by caring for all their physical needs and protecting them from their environment, how do we then stand by and watch them encounter all of life's dangers without our help? This is one of the many paradoxes of

parenthood and it is perhaps the tension of these kinds of paradoxes that can set the stage for meaningful growth for the parents as well as the children.

I have thought, as perhaps many parents have, that I would give my own life to spare the life of my child. Is this because in some basic way I feel more responsibility for my child's life than I do for my own? I am, after all, directly responsible for my children being upon this earth. My existence here was caused by my parents, not by me. Therefore, I can more easily give up my life--the one I didn't intentionally create.

This facing the fact of death through parenting is painful, scary and is mostly done alone. It's one of those experiences that lets you know most definitely that you are now a grown-up. It's no wonder, now that we do have some reproductive choice, that people choose to say no.

The task of parenthood is carried on in the isolation of the nuclear family with little support from extended families or societal institutions. David and I alone are responsible for meeting all of the physical, emotional, economic, educational and recreational needs of our children. The magnitude of fulfilling these responsibilities for three children under six years of age leads to almost constant exhaustion. Recently a friend asked if I'd be interested in a wilderness survival trip, and my immediate response was, "My god, every day with three small children is a survival trip. I don't need to test myself any further."

But out of the isolation and exhaustion of carrying out our daily tasks, David and I sense a tie to our past, to all the mothers and fathers who have gone before and to all those that will now follow. Being a parent somehow makes me feel a fuller, richer person. A person

participating in significant ways in a life flow. In building a family we feel we are affecting the future through an on-going process of change. Change that will continue to be expressed in the lives of our children. Through our children we experience an increased sense of purpose in our lives and a connectedness to a history as well as to a future.

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### Three Mile Island

Within my womb the baby stirs,  
Too large to move now, soon due.  
But my mind is a thousand miles  
Downwind and months away:  
I feel for those who fear.

For those who know life is  
New within them - cells  
At their most fragile stage -  
And must bear their waiting  
Under the hard rains:  
Anxiety which cannot be  
Measured; Anger which  
Cannot be placed.

-D. Rank

"There's Always Someone  
Missing for Supper Now"...

WHAT CHILDREN SAY ABOUT DIVORCE

by Jean Livingston

These conversations have been gathered by ongoing interviews of children and their parents through the Kids in Divorce Project. The research team is interviewing 50 families--custodial parent, non-custodial parent and children 6 to 12 years old.

A final research report will be made available to parents, teachers, child care workers, clergy and lawyers to help them understand the special needs of children of divorce. Long-range goal of the project is to provide new and improved programs to help children cope successfully with the changes in their lives brought by divorce.

Inspiration for the project was the statistical rise of 127 per cent in divorce between 1962 and 1976, despite which there is still little information available about the emotional responses of children to this crisis in their lives. I would like to share some of those responses.

"My Mom hardly visits us. She thinks my Dad is a germ or something--she won't even hug him.

When Dad told me about the divorce, I was blushing--my throat was getting sore. I wanted to hold it in. That was the worst thing in my whole life.

No, there is nothing good about divorce because children take a lot more time to get over it than other people and won't have much fun in their life.

I'd tell other kids not to feel bad, you'll get over it soon. It might change your life a little, but it won't be too bad."....

*11 year old whose mother left two years ago.*

*How I felt when  
my parents got divorced*



Lara Ulanowski

"The worst thing about the divorce is that I can't see Dad too often. My little sister screams when Dad leaves. He doesn't want me to feel sad. He never talks about it too much."....

*8 year old whose father lives in another state.*

"When you first hear about the divorce, you think you are the cause. I don't remember how I felt. I just told them I was going to run away. Then I tried to forget--I did more interesting stuff. Now I think the divorce is good. I won't be scared about the fighting and I think both my parents will be happier. The worst thing is not seeing my Dad as often and getting in the middle between Mom and Dad. Not many people at school know about the divorce. Now I'm looking for a place to hang out."....

*13 year old whose parents have been divorced one year.*

"No, I usually don't say anything to my grandma and grandpa. They wouldn't understand. My sister sometimes does. We had dinner with my aunt and uncle and they started insulting my father and making hand signs. I didn't like that. Our biggest problem is my brother. He bosses us around. He thinks he is Dad. If I knew a kid whose parents were just getting a divorce, I would tell him to ask as many questions as he can. What is divorce? What happens? What is going to happen if Dad moves out and something happens to Mom? What to do in case of emergency?"....

*11 year old whose father left one year ago.*

A Puppet Show: Begins with scene of mother and father fighting, bickering about household chores. When the child comes in, they pretend nothing is wrong.

The boy and girl talk about fighting, decide to go and comfort the mom and dad. The parents again deny they were fighting. The kids get together and decide to spy on the parents when they are supposed to be sleeping.

Parents fight again. Father walks out. Mother cries.

Next morning: Mother tells the children that father has left. Everyone cries. Mother assures the children that father will visit.

Father visits. Mother is mean to him. The kids are ecstatic.

They beg him to come back. He blames everything on the mother.

Mother discovers mice and expects the son to kill them for her.

The son gets bit by a mouse. The father decides the family needs a man around the house and comes home.

The kids are happy. They shout and say, "We saved ourselves!"....

*by an 8 year old whose parents have been divorced one year.*

"There's always someone missing for supper now. The worst thing is not having a father. Seems like something is always gone."..

*9 year old whose parents have been divorced six months.*

"If I knew a child whose parents were just about ready to get a divorce, what would I tell them? I'd say, 'Tell them not to!' I told my parents and they didn't listen. Maybe this child's parents might listen."

*6 year old whose parents are divorced a few months.*



Gail, age 10

Findings from this research should be useful to families in helping them to become aware of the need to listen to children and respond to their feelings.

Conducting the research are Jean Livingston, M.S.W., School Social Worker; Cecile Adler Cliffer, M.A., Private Therapist, Harriet Minkin, M.S.W., YWCA Program Coordinator of Services to Families in Change; and Jeanne Douglas, Ph.D. graduate student in guidance and counseling.

The KID Project staff would welcome volunteer interviewers and interviewees.

## Part Three: Inner World of Children

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Laurie

### FUTURE

Would you please be quiet  
just this once  
and listen?  
You will hear the silence  
of our disbelief  
our emptiness.  
Your world does not concern us  
We could care less  
for your reality.  
We have other things to worry through  
Beyond your idealisms  
The world is cold and dark.

In caring we hurt. We turn away  
to drugs, to sex  
money, work.  
We are content to be lost.  
High living, loose loving  
going for the thrill  
We don't care.  
Can't you see, don't you hear?

We won't, can't possibly  
take the time  
to care.

*by Laurie Lewis*

In this Year of the Child, I have been asked to write from the viewpoint of the teenager. We are on the threshold of adulthood. Some of us are treated accordingly, others are not.

As a rule, my friends and the people we know look to the future and try desperately just to make it through the present. We are marking time. There is a common feeling of being on a leash.

The overall feeling that I've gotten is a kind of lost hopelessness. When we talk out our feelings, people seem to dismiss the importance of our words because of our age. We feel as though we have little to say in any situation pertinent to our lives. We are without control.

Parents don't seem to know a hell of a lot about what their kids are doing. This isn't limited to the bad things ( drinking and drugs ), but includes the good things too. Love affairs, friendships, people that make our lives worthwhile.

Along with all the complaining and boredom, other feelings come through as we talk among ourselves. We share dreams and faith and reality...in an atmosphere of absolute trust. Nothing said here will reach the family ears.

Senior year seems to be a last year of hiding for most. I can understand the why and how, but I don't know if it's all worth it.

*by Laurie Lewis*

## CHILDREN'S ART: A MAP OF THE INNER WORLD

*by Roberta M. Bear*

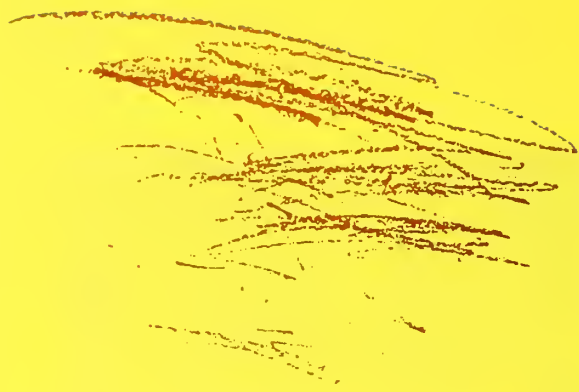
A group of college students in an education course, are asked to "draw a picture" for their professor. They laugh nervously. They are embarrassed, squirming, turning their blank sheets of paper this way and that. Given a choice among felt-tip pen, pencil, crayon, they hesitate, laughing again, saying things like, "It doesn't matter what I use: I can't draw", and "I'll give it a title, so you can tell what it is," and "Do I have to put my name on it?". They settle down finally, some still staring at the ceiling or out the window, seeking inspiration. After ten minutes, the instructor suggests they finish their drawings, time's up. Again much nervous laughter, groans, protests against having to show anybody their pictures, let alone their professor. When she tells them they may keep or discard the drawings, she doesn't intend to collect them, they are immensely relieved. Some immediately crumple or tear up the picture, others secrete it in their notebooks between the last page and the back cover. A few show theirs to their neighbors or the professor: the most talented, and the least, who have drawn a stick figure or a simple geometric design.

These students were being taught an important lesson for teachers, for any adult who works with children. They were forced to look at their feelings about drawing a picture, their discomfiture at being asked to do something which apparently borders on stripping in public.

Drawing a picture is a very private affair. We reveal our inner selves, our feelings and motives, in our drawings. That is one reason why adults do not draw, unless they consider themselves to be trained or experienced or talented artists. The majority of us stopped drawing when we left elementary school, at about age twelve. We doodle. We design in the margins of our notebooks. We occasionally create something we like, and we may share it with others. But when we are asked to draw a picture, we are very nervous. We know it may reveal something.

There is a second reason why children over twelve and adults are more reluctant to draw than younger children. Somewhere between ten and twelve years of age, most of us notice that our drawings are not as good as those we see in magazines, books, cartoons--not as realistic, not as well-balanced. Our amateur drawings just don't look like the commercial ones. Before this age, children are not concerned with such comparisons, because drawing for children is exercise in manipulating tools, space, and form. The product is less important than the process. It is only when some control of space and form have been mastered that attention turns to the product. Then, because most of us are not formally trained, we are disappointed in our drawings. We stop displaying them, and we stop drawing.

Before ten or twelve years of age, however, most children draw whenever they have the chance. And their drawings show a regular development of control over space and form. The toddler, 18 months to two or three years, scribbles with whatever she can find, on whatever surface is handy. She makes a path with her finger in the milk or strained vegetables spilled on the highchair tray: she strokes vigorously in sand or mud, with a stick, a shovel, her hand or foot. This kinesthetic behavior is not drawing as adults think of drawing: it is not making pictures. Scribbling is arm-exercise: because it leaves a mark, it quickly becomes exercise in eye-hand coordination. Experience leads eventually to the discovery that the mark can be controlled, and some time within a year of beginning scribbling, the child first purposely draws a closed shape, a circle or oval; and she draws straight lines, up and down at first, then horizontal. These purposeful units are repeated, for the sense of mastery, and interwoven with continued kinesthetic scribbling. Compare two-year-old Kiki's scribble with Nathan's at three.



Scribbles Kiki, age 2



Controlled scribbles Nathan, age 3

Adults are always pointing out pictures in books, telling the child what they are. The child imitates this behavior, and is soon labeling her drawings. Like almost-four-year-old Omar's mouse, a



Mouse Omar, almost 3

"horsie" or "fireman" may be unrecognizable and is likely to be surrounded by "grass" or "smoke" which obscures. But the child has entered a post-scribbling phase, creating pictures to tell a story. With practice, the elements become more recognizable, but their size, arrangement on the page, and details, are all egocentric. From about three until eight to ten years of age, the child's drawings are a true map to his inner feelings and motives. These drawings can be interpreted literally: what is large in them is important to the child; what is drawn first is also important; the closeness between two items in a drawing indicates emotions between them or feelings about them: and the use of space describes the child's place in the picture and his feelings about the subjects of his drawing.

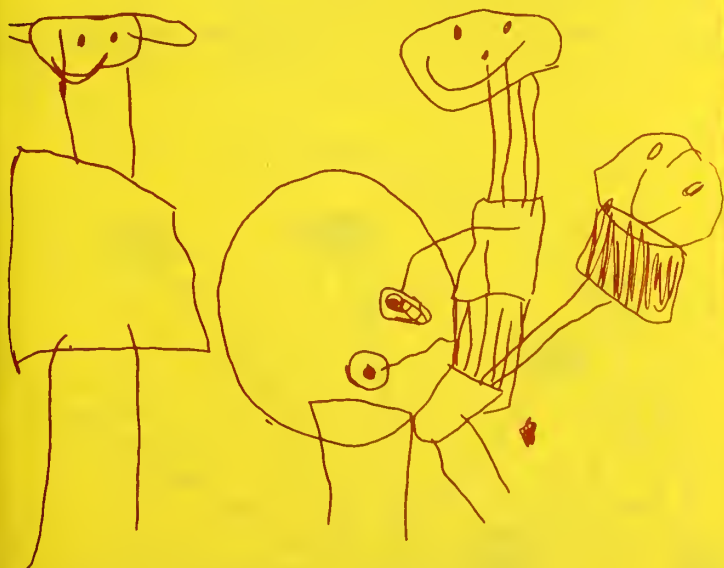


Jacob, age 6



Jacob, age 6 1/2

The two self-portraits by Jacob at age six and six-and-a-half demonstrate a dramatic shift in his self-concept. In the six-month period between them, his hyperactive behavior was diagnosed. The first self-portrait was drawn when he began taking Ritalin: six months later, his body had adjusted to the drug and he had stopped worrying that "my brain is broken".



Jacob, age 5

At five Jacob drew a series of pictures of himself and his girlfriend Jean spending the afternoon at his house. He shows us the top of the table where they are eating hamburgers. Jacob's mother, to the left, has no arms: she is not eating. Similarly, his sister in the middle of the other drawing has no hands.



Jacob, age 5

But he and Jean are holding hands---immense hands, at the end of long arms.

Elana at six draws herself standing on top of the boat, where she can both see the whales and be seen.



Elana, age 6

Out of this busy, productive phase, the child develops a repertoire of schemata, personally-standardized symbols to represent the subject matter of her drawings: the human figure, a house, a tree, flowers, autos, clouds, ground and

sky, animals. Each child reproduces in some ways what all children throughout time and space have drawn: but each child's schemata contain idiosyncratic elements that allow the observant adult to distinguish among drawings done by different children, and to recognize that two drawings were done by the same child.

Having mastered the physical world, the ten-to twelve-year-old turns her attention to detailed and accurate representation. Pictures now should look like what she sees and intends to draw.



Elana

Perspective and proportion are increasingly accurate; details elaborate the standard forms, so differences in age and sex are discernible in human figure drawings, and flowers look less like trees, horses less like large dogs. Elana at seven and Jacob at almost ten, show clear base lines and sky.

Elana's girl is too big to fit in her door, but Jacob's people look like ants and are in good proportion to his trees and the blimp.

Achieving optic realism and true representation, the child's exploration of space and form gradually ends. Children whose talent has been recognized and encouraged, who now enter formal artistic training, will continue to make pictures. With proper training, they will retain that exploratory sense, and will experiment freely with form, color, surfaces, and tools. The creative artist seeks modes of representation that go beyond graphic realism or photographic exactness; coming full circle, egocentrism is the focus as it was in the earliest years; the artist draws her very personal vision of reality.

But the majority of adults are forever stalled at the twelve-year-old level of representational drawing. This unfortunate blunting of the creative process might be relieved if parents and other adults followed a few basic principles in dealing with children's art.

Try asking a child to "tell me about your picture", rather than "what is it?" Asking for a label tells her every picture must be of some concrete thing, and it limits her to drawing people, houses, animals, preventing her drawing a sunny day or a cold night or her fear of the ocean waves. Observe the charm of the anonymous 5-year-old's happy house, and 4-year-old Jacob's camel-horse.



Jacob



Anonymous, age 5



Jacob, age 4

When a child asks the adult to show her how to draw something, it is more appropriate to provide a real model of what she is trying to draw than the adult's version of how it should be drawn. The adult's version is likely to be what that adult drew in the schematic stage, and the child in imitating it will be prevented from forming her own idiosyncratic elements. Remembering that children draw for mastery of process rather than for the product, the child should have opportunities to examine the object she wishes to draw; she should be encouraged to keep experimenting until she has found a way to depict it that satisfies her. If she wants to draw a tree, go look at trees together, attending to differences in leaf shape, in bark texture and color, in the crown and major forks; for buildings, walk around them, looking up at the roof and at the angles where walls meet, so she is encouraged to attempt some perspective other than the full-front view.

Children need to distinguish "coloring" from "drawing". Coloring books are useful to help the child gain eye-hand coordination, staying in the lines, coloring around, up and down, and back and forth as the shapes in the picture suggest. Coloring books also allow the child to experiment with color separately from form and content: the picture is already there, so she doesn't have to simultaneously think about how to make a shape and what color to use. But for every coloring book, give her a ream of blank paper,

and encourage her to draw her own pictures. Be sure she knows the picture book drawings were done by people specially trained to draw realistically or to cartoon; don't let her believe that drawing means copying them.

Finally, value the child's progress, not her products. Mounting the latest picture on the refrigerator door, note how she has "made a happy-looking person" not that the figure "looks more real" or "better" than some she did before. Encourage her to draw feelings and ideas as well as things.

And the child in all of us can be nourished by drawing. Get your own note pad and crayons. Go make a picture of anything. See what you can see of yourself in it. You may create a map to territories you forgot were there.

## Art and Poetry by Children



Mariya, 1975



If Clouds Were Cows  
It would RAIN Milk

By MARIYA

Mariya, age 5

How Snow Was Made  
Snow is made by mother natcher.  
Every week mother natcher does  
her wash. Once she was doing  
her wash and she decided she  
would use soap chips so she used  
the soap chips and they got her  
clothes real clean so she used  
them every week. One week she  
spilled the soap chips and they  
fell so earth. She watched  
them fall to earth, and she  
thought they looked neat so  
she kepted doing it and she  
decided to call it snow.  
When her arm got tired  
it became spring.

By Heather

Heather



Rhoda Riley



Sarah

## Rintos

These horses, "Mare, colt and filly, live on a nice farm. Rhoda and her foals, Soldier and Kery spend their days in a field. People come and see the famous show horse and her foals. When Soldier and Kery grow up, they to too will be show horses!

The reason Rhoda is not in shows now is because she must take care of her foals. People are coming from all around to see the Mare and her foals.

And that is my story of the Rintos.

Sarah



## Part Four: Reviews

### SNEETCHES, OORBLECKS, GRINCHES AND GACKS

*by Mimi Kaplan*

Theodore S. Geisel, known as "Dr. Seuss" to the millions of children who read his books each year, was turned down by over twenty publishers before his first book was published. Although well known for his "Quick, Henry! The Flit!" ads, and cartoons in a number of magazines, it wasn't until 1937 when TO THINK THAT I SAW IT ON MULBERRY STREET was published that Seuss was on his way to fame and fortune. Wanting to save his own name for "serious" writing, he assumed the "Dr." title after pursuing a doctorate in literature at Oxford, which he never obtained. Seuss is his middle name as well as his mother's maiden name.

I have fond memories of having one of my favorite childhood stories, THE 500 HATS OF BARTHOLOMEW CURBINS, read to me. My anxiety grew as the suspense built - 398, 399, 400 - would those hats ever stop appearing on Bartholemew's head or would he be banished to the dungeon and beheaded for disobeying orders by not removing his hat before the king? After awhile the hats began to change in appearance: they became grander and grander until finally, one was more beautiful than the king's own crown. The king offered Bartholemew 500 gold pieces for his magnificent chapeau and lo and behold, when Bartholemew removed the hat to give it to the king, he felt a breeze rustling his hair-- miraculously, that was the final hat, number 500! Bartholemew's head was saved, he was able to take the gold back to his poor family, and justice prevailed.

Years later, reading Dr. Seuss books to my own youngsters, I continued to enjoy his fantastic menagerie of creatures including Drum-Tummied Snumm "who can drum any tune that you might care to hum", Thidwick the Big-Hearted Moose, Yertle the Turtle and the Bippo-no-Bungus from Hippo-no-Hungus or the Tufted Mazurka from the Isle of Yerka. His wacky, cartoon-like illustrations are the perfect accompaniment to the crazy creatures, make-believe settings and outlandish plots. Visualize a Seuss story with someone else's drawings-- it's impossible! The two are as necessary to each other as peanut butter and jelly to a sandwich or cream cheese and lox to a bagel.

To read a Seuss story aloud is pure fun! If you love rhymes with a beat, these are for you: "And that is a story that no one can beat/And to think that I saw it on Mulberry Street." Listen to Gerald McGrew talk about the new kinds of animals he would like in IF I RAN THE ZOO: "A sort of a kind of a Thing-a-ma-Bobsk/who eats only rhubarb and corn-on-the-cobsk." And Morris McQuirk, in IF I RAN THE CIRCUS says: "After all, Mr Smeelock is one of my friends/He might even help out doing small odds and ends,/Doing little old jobs, he could be of some aid.../Such as selling balloons and pink lemonade." And who can forget the children's pet fish in THE CAT IN THE HAT who warns them about the chaos the Cat has created in their house: "But your mother will come./She will find this big mess!/And this mess is so big/And so deep and so tall,/We can not pick it up./There is no way at all."

Carolyn Bauer, discussing humor in children's books, says kids love broad slapstick, word

games, jokes, tongue twisters, riddles, tall tales, rhymes and limericks. Seuss employs every one of these in his humorous stories.

Selma Lanes, in her book DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE, believes Seuss recognizes that children crave excitement in their reading and directs his stories to that pent-up anxiety that needs releasing. He magnifies and multiplies the suspense in his stories until the child is so excited and anxious with anticipation that s/he is ready to pop. Seuss's doggerel moves at a fast pace and his outlandish drawings seem effortless. Lanes feels the child is at a "mild fever pitch" by the time Seuss is coming to the climax of the story. Lanes also points out that central to the Seuss formula is the action of all his books, with children as protagonists, which takes place either "(1) in the absence of grownups, or (2) in the imagination." Peter T. Hooper in SCRAMBLED EGGS SUPER! states: "Why, only last Tuesday, when mother was out/I really cooked something worth talking about." Or remember how The Cat in the Hat wreaks chaos only when "our mother was out of the house for the day". Young Morris McGurk daydreams about the circus and Marco's imagination runs wild as he describes a supercolossal parade in place of the horse and wagon that he actually sees on his walk down Mulberry Street. Gerald McGrew would "go to the far-away Mountains of Tobsk/Near the River of Nobsk to bring back an Obsk" in order to find animals for his zoo.

Just as Seuss' tales are built on suspense, his zany illustrations add to the intensity of the story. Nervous squiggles and curlicues abound, and there seems to be constant movement in his pictures. Lanes points out the bubbling over coffee pots, milk glasses that look like they are about to be tipped, batter splattered everywhere, and cakes that are never

intact. Such chaos also seems to express children's sense of lack of control over their physical world.

Geisel appears as the ultimate moralist. Truth, justice and equality for all are themes running through many of his stories. Bartholomew, son of poor serfs, triumphs at the end not only by saving his head from rolling, but by bringing back 500 gold pieces to his family. Horton the elephant sits in a tree hatching an egg for Mayzie, the no-good lazy bird who flies off to bask in the Palm Beach sun, and though miserable the whole time, Horton exclaims "I meant what I said/And I said what I meant../An elephant's faithful/One hundred per cent!" Horton is rewarded in the end for his steadfast faithfulness, for when the egg hatches "Horton the Elephant saw something whizz!/It had ears and a tail and a trunk just like his!" Thidwick the Big Hearted Moose's horns become home for pests he won't and can't get rid of because they're guests. But the just are rewarded: OLD horns come off so that NEW ones can grow, and "His old horns today are/Where you knew they would be/His guests are still on them /All stuffed, as they should be." Seuss's plea for minority rights is exemplified in HORTON HEARS A WHO! when the tiny Whos are described: "A person's a person, no matter how small."

In the mid 50's when everyone was worrying about Johnny not being able to read, Seuss's publisher, Random House, suggested he write a book to include no more than 348 words of one syllable. The rest is history: a rakish-looking cat wearing a stove-pipe hat took the world of children's readers by storm. THE CAT IN THE HAT was first of the now famous and often copied, Beginner Books. Under another pseudonym, Theo. LeSieg (Geisel spelled backwards) launched Bright and Early Books for pre-schoolers.

Even though Geisel's books look effortless, a typical 60 page Seuss

book takes him over a year to complete and he discards as many as 500 drawings before he is through. According to Geisel, "When you write for kids, you can't lose them for one second. If you don't take the child forward with each turn of the page, you're cooked."

Although never having children of his own, Seuss has had no trouble appealing to youngsters (and adults) for over 40 years. Since the 70's, several of his books have been made into animated television specials; though they are delightful, this writer believes that Seuss is meant for reading. It is too easy for a child to sit passively in front of the screen. The fun is in reciting the sing-song verse, the silly-sounding words and discovering with each turn of the page, another ridiculous but lovable Seuss character.

Children (and grownups) love to laugh. A humorous Seuss book can be a method of shared enjoyment for both the parent and child, or it might be just the spark to get a reluctant reader interested enough to start reading.

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## JOHNNY LINNY'S NIGHTMARE

by Roberta Rosen

This very slim, short volume, dealing with child abuse, has the explosiveness of dynamite, telling how it is to feel all alone when you're a small child.

Nine-year-old Johnny still has nightmares, fewer than before, even though he is warm, secure and loved by his 'really-real' parents. The love and trust Johnny feels for his 'parents' stands him in good stead when his friend, Maria, the case-worker, comes to take Johnny back to Chicago from the small farm in southern Illinois. Johnny doesn't understand about court orders and lawyers but he trusts his 'daddy' when he says it is for only two weeks.

When Johnny is greeted by his natural parents you can sense his terror and that all-gone feeling he has among these familiar strangers. The nightmares become constant companions again and nothing has really changed, except that Johnny knows the nightmares are real. He counts the days until his 'daddy' comes to get him and make everything alright again. Even when he is beaten for running away in terror and is brought back and then beaten again for wetting his bed, Johnny knows his 'really-real' daddy will come for him at the end of the two weeks. He tries to wait patiently.

Ms. Rosen's book has great impact and raises some important questions. There are no easy answers. It is truly a nightmare.

Published by Vantage Press, Johnny Linny's Nightmare is suitable for all age groups. However, very young readers may be disturbed by its content.

*Review By S. J. Heidekrueger*

Masumi Hayushi Keesey



STELLA PEVSNER: POPULAR  
WRITER FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

by Lou Kerr

(An interview with Stella Pevsner before she spoke to a Children and Young Adult Literature class at Governors State University.)

For all appearances, Stella Pevsner is like many typical suburban women: poised, smartly attired and busy with her family. However, one is also aware that she is a keen observer of life around her, particularly the life of young teens. Her ability to portray where they are, what they do, how they feel and think is what makes her novels so popular with the 10 to 14 year olds.

Many of her stories are set in a suburb similar to Palatine, where she resides and raised her two sons and two daughters. The west Chicago suburb is easily recognized in her latest novel, AND YOU GIVE ME A PAIN, ELAINE (1978). She describes how young people congregate to the large shopping mall which she patterned after Woodfield, and many of the stores her characters visit are vaguely familiar. Pevsner purposely sets her stories in suburbs; as she explained, there are many children's books about kids living in New York, but how many young readers actually relate to living in a big city?

Her own children's teen years provided her with a wealth of material and ample opportunities to observe and learn about young people. She talked about the constant stream of teenagers who passed through the house as her children were growing up. These are the persons that have become the prototypes for her characters and her stories have been based upon their experiences in their suburban environment.

However, her books are also an expression of Stella and her character. She told us that her

stories always express a hopeful outlook and end on a positive note. She also said she writes in an honest fashion, exposing her readers to ideas that she believes in herself. Her ability to identify with young people, to relate to and understand their feelings, their problems and their varied lifestyles, and to weave these observations into a novel are the ingredients that make Pevsner's books so appealing.



# FROM THE EDITOR'S PLAYGROUND

## On "letting out the child"



Helen Kennebunk, Maine

When I see the bumpersticker around here that admonishes HAVE YOU HUGGED YOUR KID TODAY? I give myself, metaphorically, a bearhug. Nevermind that this particular bumpersticker has been subject to humorous variations such as HAVE YOU HUGGED YOUR MOTORCYCLE TODAY? intended to ridicule this concern for kids. Those who poke fun at the idea of hugging your kid may represent the anti-child factor in modern American culture and, as such, be just another subtle form of the attitudes leading to neglect and abuse of children which is so well documented in this special issue on The Worlds of Children.

But inside every busy, hurrying adult there is a little kid who is often neglected, and when that happens, the quality of life is impoverished.

In this College we teach, among other theories of human behavior, the ideas of Eric Berne known as Transactional Analysis, based on three ego states in the normal adult personality: the Child, the Parent, and the Adult. The Child is that part that wants, hurts, cries, laughs, feels sad, gets into mischief, wants its

own way. Also, Berne holds that creativity depends on ready access to the Child, the source of play, spontaneity, free movement of the imagination, and refers to the creative Child who slumbers within every adult as "the little Professor".

I decided to go around and ask my colleagues who are big adult professors if they had "hugged their kid today", and what they do to attend to the needs and nature of the Child within them. I found that they like to play with their own children for relaxation, to go walking in the woods and kicking leaves, to get with real good friends that they've known for years and...regress, wear a horrible, grotesque mask to a faculty meeting, design ridiculous experiments, play practical jokes on each other...and I conclude that they are indeed in touch with their Child-selves more than many people in the grown-up world.

My friend, Stu, when frustration reaches a certain critical point, sits down and composes a nut-o-gram which he then fires off to some unsuspecting friend or co-worker. A nut-o-gram may look like this:

Here my Hoohes -  
Wife all way wolchun throw  
a medow a man on a bike - a  
greene bike - gived me sum schdury  
too yend 2 U. He sed he way very  
bigy wurken on a seecit sheery - hee  
has evidens 2 sho that Gorge McElm  
and Gorge Wallace R bruthery son  
tho thay haf the sain nagn. Hee  
is biary 2 pruv it an hee wil wryt  
sure.

HEE must bee on 2 sumthin beay  
HEE SED THIZ KID MEEN A NEW  
BISK AZ A REEWARK. MUSTER  
TAVCOLAREASS PROMUSED IT 2 HEM

By By

and I assure you they are treasured by the recipients.

To enjoy play and nonsense, to keep

the ability to be silly, to laugh, to see  
the absurdity of it all--and thus, to  
achieve a sense of proportion again--  
these are some of the rewards of keeping  
alive the Child.

Helen Hughes

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Harold Reiss

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#### OBITUARY

With sorrow we report the death of Martha Hamilton who served as editorial assistant during Fall 1977 when the special issue on literature was in preparation.



Rhoda Riley

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